

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PEKING 00054 060311Z
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INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 0054

EXDIS (DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS)

HONG KONG PLEASE PASS TO AMBA WOODCOCK AND ASST SEC HOLBROOKE
DURING A.M. JANUARY 6

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: OREP (KENNEDY, EDWARD M) CH TW US UR

SUBJ: SENATOR KENNEDY'S MEETINGS WITH CHINESE LEADERS: IMPRESSIONS

REF: (A) PEKING 0024 (B) PEKING 0026 (C) PEKING 0042 (D) PEKING 0044

1. REFTELS PROVIDE HIGHLIGHTS AND NEAR VERBATIM TRANSCRIPTS
OF SENATOR KENNEDY'S MEETINGS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER HUANG HUA
AND VICE PREMIER TENG HSIAO-PING. THIS MESSAGE SUMMARIZES
INITIAL USLO IMPRESSIONS OF SUBSTANTIVE ASPECTS OF THE MEETINGS.

2. SENATOR KEENNEDY PRESENTED HIMSELF TO PRC STATE LEADERS AS
AN AMERICAN POLITICAL LEADER IN THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC
TRADITION, ONE WHO PERSONALLY FAVORED US-PRC NORMALIZATION
ALONG THE LINES OF THE SHANGHAI COMMUNIQUE BUT WHO WAS FORCED
AS A SPOKESMAN FOR HIS CONSTITUENCY TO RECOGNIZE "THE HARSH
REALITY OF THE AMERICAN POLITICAL CLIMATE". SENATOR KENNEDY
MADE PLAIN THAT MANY AMERICANS OPPOSED NORMALIZATION AND
WOULD ACTIVELY SEEK TO RETARD THE PROCESS, BECAUSE THE PRC
WAS UNWILLING TO DELIVER ANY COMMITMENT OR UNDERSTANDING ON
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EVENTUAL PEACEFUL LIBERATION OF TAIWAN.

3. THE MESSAGE WAS NOT ALTOGETHER NEW, BUT IT WAS
DELIVERED WITH AN IMPRESSIVE ARRAY OF SUPPORTING ARGUMENT AND
DATA. THE CALM AND MEASURED CHINESE RESPONSE -- WHICH GAVE NO
QUARTER ON FUNDAMENTAL CHINESE PRINCIPLES, HOWEVER -- IN OUR

VIEW BESPEAKS AN ENHANCED PRC UNDERSTANDING OF AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION, HOPEFULLY A GREATER SOPHISTICATION IN DEALING WITH INFLUENTIAL POLITICAL LEADERS.

4. AS WE HAVE OBSERVED PREVIOUSLY, THE RESPECTIVE PRESENTATIONS OF FOREIGN MINISTER HUANG HUA AND VICE PREMIER TENG HSIAO-PING TOOK THE SAME LINE ON BASIC PRECONDITIONS FOR NORMALIZATION BUT DIFFERED SOMEWHAT IN TONE AND NUANCE. WE ARE PREPARED TO CONCEDE THAT THESE DIFFERENCES MAY BE MERELY STYLISTIC; BUT WE SUSPECT THAT TENG MIGHT BE SOMEWHAT MORE PREPARED -- AND ABLE -- TO EXPLORE WAYS OF CIRCUMVENTING MAJOR STICKING POINTS.

5. BOTH HUANG AND TENG EMPHASIZED THAT:

-- THE CHINESE COULD ABIDE# NO AMERICAN DEMAND THAT A COMMITMENT OR UNDERSTANDING ON PEACEFUL LIBERATION OF TAIWAN SHOULD PRECEDE NORMALIZATION (BOTH CHARACTERIZED THIS AS AN INFRINGEMENT ON CHINESE "SOVEREIGNTY"); AND
--THE CHINESE ARE NOT "FLEXIBLE" ON CONDITIONS FOR NORMALIZATION. THE WORD "FLEXIBLE" STILL RANKLES, APPARENTLY, IN THE WAKE OF THE PRESS FLAP FOLLOWING SECRETARY VANCE'S AUGUST VISIT. TO THE CHINESE THE WORD IS TINGED WITH HIGHLY NEGATIVE CONNOTATIONS WHEN IT IS COUPLED WITH AN IMPLICATION THAT THEY MIGHT ABANDON THEIR PRINCIPLES. TENG EXPLICITLY TOOK NOTE OF SECRETARY VANCE'S PROPOSAL OF A GOVERNMENTAL PRESENCE ON TAIWAN FOLLOWING NORMALIZATION,
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STATING THAT "THIS PROPOSAL CANNOT WORK".

6. IN OTHER AREAS, HOWEVER, HUANG'S MESSAGE WAS CONSIDERABLY TOUGHER AND MORE RIGID (THOUGH CONSISTENTLY POLITE AND NONBELLICOSE). HUANG TOLD SENATOR KENNEDY BLUNTLY: "I HAVE THE FEELING THAT YOU HAVE FAILED TO GRASP THE ESSENTIAL POINTS OF THE PROBLEM." HE CITED THE FOREGOING POINTS, THEN NOTED THAT THE SENATOR'S PROPOSAL OF US ASSISTANCE TO TAIWAN ON "SECURITY MATTERS" FOLLOWING NORMALIZATION WAS ALSO AN INTOLERABLE INFRINGEMENT OF CHINESE SOVEREIGNTY. THE FOREIGN MINISTER ALSO VOLUNTEERED THAT "WE CAN WAIT (ON NORMALIZATION) BUT WE CANNOT WAIT INDEFINITELY".

7. IN DIRECT CONTRAST, TENG TWICE TOLD SENATOR KENNEDY THAT "IF THE US NEEDS TAIWAN NOW, WE CAN WAIT ... PEOPLE OF MY AGE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO SEE THE GOAL (OF LIBERATION OF TAIWAN) FULFILLED". ASKED ABOUT "FLEXIBILITY," TENG ALLOWED THAT THE PRC WAS FLEXIBLE ON TIMING OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE TAIWAN PROBLEM, THAT HE CONSIDERED THE JAPANESE FORMULA ITSELF A TYPE OF FLEXIBILITY. TENG ALSO ADDED -- NOT A NEW LINE BUT A SIGNIFICANT ONE -- THAT THE CHINESE WOULD "TAKE NOTE

OF PARTICULAR CONDITIONS IN TAIWAN".

8. WE BELIEVE THAT THIS LAST LINE MIGHT REFLECT WILLINGNESS TO EXPLORE WAYS OF GIVING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE A SENSE THAT LIBERATION OF TAIWAN -- IN THE DISTANT FUTURE -- WILL IN FACT BE PEACEFUL. IN THIS REGARD, THE COMMENT TO DELEGATION MEMBER KALICKI BY MFA US DIVISION DIRECTOR TING YUAN-HUNG STRIKES US AS POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT : "WE CANNOT COMMIT OURSELVES TO A PEACEFUL LIBERATION OF TAIWAN, BUT I THINK PERHAPS WE MAY TELL OUR PEOPLE INTERNALLY -- INCLUDING OUR PEOPLE ON TAIWAN -- THAT THEY MAY EXPECT A PEACEFUL AND PROSPEROUS FUTURE." ONE POSSIBLE INTERPRETATION OF THIS, ASSUMING THAT TING WAS CORRECTLY QUOTED, IS THAT THE CHINESE ARE SEEKING WAYS
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OF GIVING SUBLTE ASSURANCES -- SHORT OF AN EXPLICIT AGREEMENT OR NEGOTIATED UNDERSTANDING -- THAT ARMED LIBERATION IS NOT IN THE CARDS. THUS, WE FIND IT WORTH NOTING THAT THE SPECTRE OF ARMED LIBERATION WAS NOT ONCE RAISED IN THE MEETING WITH SENATOR KENNEDY, EVEN BY THE NOTORIOUSLY BLUNT-SPOKEN AMBASSADOR HAO TE-CHING (WHO ALSO FAILED TO RAISE IT IN HIS JANUARY 5 SESSION WITH DOCEL CRANSTON).

). THIS MESSAGE HAS NOT BEEN CLEARED WITH SENATOR KENNEDY OR MEMBERS OF HIS CODEL.DEAN

NOTE BY OC/T: #AS RECEIVED.

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